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# THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

BY JOHN ALLAN WYETH, M. D., LL.D.

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THE Monroe Doctrine, accepted as an essential article of the political faith of the people of the United States, compels the recognition of our obligation, not only to other nations, but above all else to humanity, to take immediate steps to put an end to the anarchy, bloodshed, rapine and robbery which for years have made Mexico a disgrace to civilization.

The hopelessness of the Mexican situation lies chiefly in the impossibility, under conditions which have long existed, of bringing the people together in a common understanding of each other; and, in the opinion of the writer, nothing but intervention on our part, and the establishment of a stable government, by force, if necessary, can accomplish this.

Of the 15,000,000 inhabitants, approximately 1,000,000 are Caucasian; 2,000,000 are of mixed blood, and 12,000,000 are Indian descendants of the natives dwelling there at the time of the Spanish conquest. There are 133 separate tribes, speaking 53 different languages and numerous dialects, a condition which makes inter-tribal communication and the establishment of peaceful relations impossible.

In his *South America*, referring to Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru, James Bryce says: "In such countries there can be very little public opinion common to the nation, because the means of intercommunication are defective and slow. . . . The existence in the same state of different races, speaking different languages, prevents the homogeneity and solidarity which are almost indispensable conditions to the success of democratic government."

Moral degeneracy, due to the almost universal consumption of "pulque," the national intoxicant, and to the widespread disregard for the marital relation, is the natural result of the miserable conditions which have long prevailed.

McHugh says: "Marriage among them has no sacred meaning, and more than half the total births in Mexico are

illegitimate. Church and State are at war over the marriage ceremony, with the result that a vast number of these uneducated beings think a civil marriage is no marriage, and as they are unable to pay the price for the church ceremony, they dispense with both."

A century of misgovernment and unrest has naturally contributed to this absence of moral restraint and to the widespread savagery which prevails. A recital of the authenticated barbarities which are constantly occurring would be as painful as it is unnecessary, but a single paragraph from McHugh's *Modern Mexico* is significant:

"So long as he, the peon, is kept in hand, he is fairly quiet and tractable, but when he takes to the road, and becomes his own master, he is turbulent, savage and brutal, displaying all the cruelty, lust and disregard of human life and suffering that is characteristic of the American Indian. The fiendish savagery of this class has been manifested again and again during the past three years by endless incidents, like the treatment of the women at the San Vincente mine in Guerrero, and at the wreck of the train to Cuernavaca last May, when the injured men were murdered, and the women passengers ravished, and then thrown into the burning train, that had been deliberately set on fire."

It does not detract from the significance of this awful incident to know that it occurred almost within sight of the capital of Mexico.

The moral degeneration which these crimes attest—in fact, all the misfortunes of Mexico—are the cumulative product of long years of misrule, and her people should be judged in charity and dealt with in mercy. Revolution has followed revolution in such assured succession that anarchy is supreme. From 1821, when Spanish sovereignty ceased, to the murder of Madero and the accession of Huerta, Mexico has had sixty-four different rulers. Leaving out the autocracy of Juarez and Diaz, who ruled with merciless severity, and to whom protest or opposition meant banishment, imprisonment, confiscation, or death, the average duration of the term of office of the sixty other rulers was eight months. Several served only a few days; one was president for only twenty-six minutes; and, incredible as it must appear, in a single instance, Comonfort joined in an insurrection, and overthrew his own government.

In the brief period which has elapsed since the death of Madero, Huerta has been exiled, and Carbajal, Obregon,

Guiterez and Garza have claimed the authority which none can successfully assume and maintain.

There can be no solution of this serious problem except by intervention, and intervention without annexation would only prolong a cruel experiment. As plainly as the writing on the wall, our national destiny is impelling us to the occupation of Mexico; not for conquest, nor for commercial gain, but for the benefit of her unfortunate people should we establish and insure forever in that unhappy land the order of civilization.

No people, however benighted, can fail to appreciate the blessings of peace. Correct the cruel abuses which peonage implies; give them their lands and homes, and the chance to live by honest means; give them, by patient and kindly encouragement and assistance, education and a common language; and give them, above all, good roads and ready intercommunication; for, in the long run, the pick and shovel compel obedience to the law more surely than Springfield rifles or Maxim guns.

Of her 15,000,000 inhabitants fully 12,000,000 are bound in the hopeless servitude of peonage; a condition more deplorable than was that of the negro slaves in our Southern States. Practically all the land is owned or controlled by the State, which has made no satisfactory distribution of its holdings, or by a landed oligarchy. We are told that seventy-two individuals own all the land in Yucatan, the area of which is more than three times as large as Massachusetts. Twenty-seven individuals are the proprietors of another State, and a single citizen owns 20,000,000 acres.

We can surely afford to act toward Mexico—with its boundary line of 1993 miles in touch with ours—in the same unselfish spirit we have shown toward the Philippines, thousands of miles overseas.

The gratifying result which has followed the bestowal of lands and homes and citizenship, and a voice in government, upon our Indian tribes in Oklahoma, would be well worth a trial with the scattered warring tribes in Mexico, where centuries of poverty, ignorance and oppression have made the poor so poor that banditry is their only resort. Each of our 41,698 Cherokees received 110 acres of land; the Creeks, Choctaws, Seminoles, Chickasaws and Osages an equal, or larger allotment. They have made homes and quickly adapted themselves to the law and order of civilization. The Secretary of the Interior has made the statement in print that each of the Osages received 657 acres of land, and are today among the

most prosperous of our citizens. The errors made in our earlier dealings with the aborigines would naturally be avoided in the future.

Our preponderance of men and means, with tactful measures and kindly treatment, should readily overcome any opposition to annexation, and once our territorial system of government is established, the wonderful resources of Mexico would invite an enterprising immigration which within a single generation would insure the permanent reign of law and order. Moreover, this addition to the national domain would bring us nearer to our great canal, to which far-sighted statesmanship may foresee the advisability of having access by land through a protectorate exercised over the intervening States.

Finally, we would emphasize the Monroe Doctrine by entering into a solemn engagement with each and every government of the continent of South America that the United States will never encroach upon their territory, and will join with them should it ever become necessary to protect them from foreign invasion.

JOHN ALLAN WYETH.